

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 OMB-01 /090 W

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R 301252Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9649

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAMSCUS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EG, MO, AG, MR

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN "MEDIATION" IN SAHARA

1. BANNER HEADLINES IN LOCAL PRESS JANUARY 30 DESCRIBE VISIT OF VP MUBARAK TO MOROCCO, MAURITANIA AND ALGERIA AS "MEDIATION" MISSION. FEATURE STORIES GIVE EGYPTIAN POSITION AS ENDEAVOR FIRST TO STOP FIGHTING AND THEN BEGIN DIALOGUE BETWEEN PARTIES CONCERNED SO AS TO MAINTAIN UNITY OF ARAB MAGHRIB AND UNITY OF ARAB FRONT.

2. ARAB LEAGUE SYG RIAD REPORTEDLY RECEIVED MESSAGE JANUARY 29 FROM ALGERIAN FONMIN EXPLAINING CIRCUMSTANCES AND RAMIFICATIONS OF ARMED CLASH IN AL-MUGHLAA AND UNDERLINING SERIOUSNESS OF RECENT EVENTS, ESPECIALLY RE SECURITY AND STABILITY OF VITAL REGION OF AFRICA AND THE ARAB HOMELAND. SYG RIAD IS REPORTEDLY CONTINUING HIS

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CONTACTS WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS AND HAS SENT URGENT MESSAGES

TO ALL ARAB GOVERNMENTS URGING UTMOST EFFORTS TO END CRISIS.

3. COMMENT: RAPPORTAGE AND EDITORIALS CONTAIN TWO INTERESTING POINTS. FIRST, GOE IS NOW OPENLY ENDEAVORING "MEDIATE." SECOND, AHARAM AND AKHBAR EDITORIALS LINK ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN FIGHTING WITH LEBANESE CIVIL WAR, CLAIMING LEBANESE EVENTS CREATED PATTERN OF FOREIGN CONSPIRACIES INTENDED TO DIVIDE ARAB FRONT.

4. WHILE NOT WISHING TO DENEGRATE MUBARAK'S ABILITIES, IT IS FAIR TO SAY HE IS NOT SEASONED DIPLOMAT. COMMENT IS RIFE IN CAIRO THAT HAD SADAT REALLY HOPED HE COULD ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL MEDIATIONS, HE WOULD HAVE SENT SOMEONE WITH DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE WITH MUBARAK; MFA UNDERSECRETARY RIAD IS MOST OFTEN MENTIONED. INSTEAD, FAHMY'S CHEF DE CABINET, USAMA AL-BAZ, WAS SENT ALONG. SPECULATION IS, THEREFORE, THAT SADAT DOES NOT REALLY EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO STOP THE FIGHTING BUT IS DETERMINED SHOW WHOLE ARAB WORLD THAT EGYPT IS LIVING UP TO IS RESPONSIBILITIES AS ARAB LEADER. CHOICE OF "MEDIATOR" WITH HIGH RANK OF VICE PRESIDENT IS BELIEVED HERE TO REFLECT THIS DETERMINATION BY SADAT, ESPECIALLY SINCE SYRIANS SENT LOWER RANKING DEPPRIMIN AS THEIR MEDIATOR.

5. THIS ASSESSMENT IS BORNE OUT BY AGMIN BADRAN'S REMARKS TO EMBOFF JANUARY 29 THAT SADAT HAD TO INSERT HIMSELF INTO THIS "NO-WIN" CRISIS BECAUSE BOTH GOA AND GOM HAD "CASHED IN THEIR CHIPS" TO OBTAIN EGYPT'S SUPPORT, ("CHIPS" INCLUDE ALGERIAN ARM PURCHASES FOR EGYPT FROM USSR DURING OCTOBER WAR AND MOROCCO'S ASSISTANCE IN WAR AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SINAI II).
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